sentence reduced from two years to six months; and

25. Instead of clauses (1), (2) and (3) a simple provision be made that any one sentenced to imprisonment for six months or more should be debarred from contesting elections.

**Party Whips for Presidential Election**

757. SHRI TARA CHARAN MAJUMDAR: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have either amended existing rules or formulated new rules banning the issue of Party Whips by all political parties to its members while participating in the Presidential Election in future; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT AND DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE) (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) No. Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

**Vacant posts of Judges in High Courts**

758. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of vacancies of judges, High Court-wise; and

(b) action taken to fill up the vacancies early?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) The requisite information is given in the enclosed statement. (*See* below)

(b) The procedure for appointments involves consultations among several constitutional authorities. However, every effort is being made to fill up existing vacancies at the earliest.

**Statement**

| Sl. No. | High Court | Vacancies of Judges as on 01.11.1997 |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Allahabad | 13 |
| 2. | Andhra Pradesh | 3 |
| 3. | Bombay | 9 |
| 4. | Calcutta | 10 |
| 5. | Delhi | 3 |
| 6. | Gauhati | — |
| 7. | Gujarat | 7 |
| 8. | Himachal Pradesh | — |
| 9. | Jammu & Kashmir | 5 |
| 10. | Karnataka | 5 |
| 11. | Kerala | 1 |
| 12. | Madhya Pradesh | 4 |
| 13. | Madras | 4 |
| 14. | Orissa | 1 |
| 15. | Patna | 5 |
| 16. | Punjab & Haryana | 9 |
| 17. | Rajasthan | 3 |
| 18. | Sikkim | 2 |
| | Total: | 84 |

**Amendment to the Representation of the People Act**

759. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Chief Election Commissioner has called for amendment to the Representation of the People Act to make it mandatory for political parties to fill specified number of women candidates in elections; and

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.